

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## OUR OLD STORY PAPERS "GOLDEN DAYS" No. 2

by W. M. Burns

When I was a youth of about 15-16 years of age. I was given a huge amount of boys story papers. Given me gratis simply to get them out of the owners way.

There were long consecutive runs of story papers such as "Young Men of America," "Beadles Weekly," "Banner Weekly," "Happy Days," "Golden Hours" and last, but not least "Golden Days." (A lot of black and white novels were in the lot also. But I have written about these before.)

Well, at that age I was earning a little pocket money every week, and as an avid lover of dime novels was spending the large part of it on my favorite novels of that era. I managed to get "Pluck & Luck," "Brave & Bold," "Secret Service" and "Buffalo Bill" nearly every week. Also "Happy Days." Now the "Young Men of America," "Beadles and Banner Weeklies" were highly interesting as I had never seen any of either before those. Also the "Happy Days," as they were old over that I had never read. But in going over the "Golden Days" I can still remember my reactions plainly, and my thoughts also. After reading "blood and thunder" for years. This run of "Golden Days" just simply did not appeal to me a bit.

My judgement probably ran something like this. "Pshaw! This 'namby-pamby' 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' stuff is all right for Sunday School kids. But not up my alley at all." So I discarded it unread, gave it away or sold

it for old paper, I cannot recall which.

For years after joining H. H. B. I would not touch a story paper of any kind in a cash deal or a trade. However after my little collection of Beadles reached the point where only badly wanted items came in only at the rate of a dozen or less per year. I once more turned my attention to old story papers and old time boys cloth bound books.

In the two latter classes they came at me faster than I could afford to buy them, with my limited means. So now I have some good long runs of "Golden Argosy," "Golden Days," "Golden Hours," "Banner Weekly," "New York Weekly," etc. The "Golden Days" were offered me so cheaply that I simply could not refuse them. I have a finely cloth bound volume 9 and vols. 11 and 12 in unbound condition.

And in looking them over I was really surprised at my lack of acumen as a youth in passing them up as a "namby-pamby" story paper. The only excuse that I can offer, is that I was at that time (and still am) more interested in the "blood and thunder" type of story paper mentioned above.

Now the majority of the authors that wrote for Golden Days were such as Edward Stratemeyer, Edward S. Ellis, Horatio Alger Jr., Oliver Optic, James Otis, Victor St. Clair, William P. Chipman, Harry Castlemon, George W. Coomer, John Russell Coryell, etc. Yes, John R. Coryell, the originator of "Nick Carter" was a regular contributor to Golden Days. A fine writer of long serial juvenile tales in those days 1888-1891. He not only wrote juveniles for Golden Days, but for St. Nicholas

and Harpers Young People as well.

Now the above named authors as nearly every reader of this article knows, wrote only good vigorous tales. None could be rightly called writers of "namby-pamby" tales.

And so much for the hasty "snap" judgement of youth.

"Golden Days" was started in or about the year 1880, by Jas. Elverson of Philadelphia. Probably the first of at least six story papers and libraries to use the word "Golden" in their masthead. Still Frank Leslie's "Golden Prize" started in 1880 and died after a short run. But I am inclined to believe that Elverson was ahead of him in using the word "Golden" in his heading.

Now Golden Days was about 14½x11 in size, or roughly about the same size as Golden Argosy, and a bit smaller than Happy Days.

I have no real early issues, but have a few scattering copies of Vol. 6, "dog-eared," but still brave in their pale green covers. Sixteen four-column pages from the start. In volume 6, three serials per issue was the rule with a lot of short stories and fact articles to make up the 16 pages. In vol. 9, four and occasionally five, serials per issue was the rule. This I believe was the rule from then on to the end. Although the serials might have crept up to six per issue before the end. As I have none of the last volumes, I cannot state for sure. The pages were four-column pages, incidentally.

Now for some samples of the kinds of stories in Golden Days. Lack of space will forbid listing even half the serials in my volumes 9-11-12. So I will list only those that were by my own favorite boyhood authors. Now Alger was not a favorite author of mine. But as only one story by him appeared in these three volumes I will list it, as I am told that it was never reprinted in book form.

The story is titled, "Robert Coverdale; or, The Young Fisherman of Cooks Harbor."

One of my favorite authors in books, story papers and dime novels is Edward S. Ellis. Only one story by him likewise. This was complete in vol. 9 and titled, "The Moose Trackers; or, Hunting on Snow Shoes." This is a story of the Kennebeck River and the upper Kennebeck Valley region of Maine.

Remember the "Oscar Preston" series of stories by Harry Castlemon? Well, my vols. 11-12 contain the series of three as follows. "Two Ways of Becoming a Hunter," "The Camp in the Foothills; or, Oscar on Horseback," and "Oscar in Africa."

George W. Coomer has two good ones titled, "The Disputed Claim; or, Perseverance Under Difficulties" and "The Young Explorers. A Tale of Land and Sea."

"The Mill Boy of the Genesee" and "The Young Lineman; or, In the Jungles of Siam" by Rev. William P. Chipman are really two fine tales.

Three others of real merit are "Cast Adrift; or, Ned Carroll's Promise," "Andy Fletcher, The Story of a Boy With a Purpose," and "Pride and Poverty; or, The Story of a Brave Boy."

The above three are written by John Russell Coryell.

Remember those Victor St. Clair tales that we used to read in "Bound-to-Win Library"?

Well here's three by St. Clair that appeared in Golden Days. They are, "Roughing it On Range and Ranch; or, An American Boy in Queensland," "Bayard, the Bicyclist" and "Railroad Rock, the Train Boy of the Pen Yan; or, Doing His Level Best."

Cannot forget a favorite author for many years, so must list James Otis, "In the Badlands" and "Down the Mississippi; or, Life on a Flat-Boat." This latter is one of the best of many tales that I have read, written by Otis (James Otis Kaler. A real personage.)

Edward Stratemeyer often wrote for Golden Days also. One good tale by him was titled, "Captain Bobs Secret; or, The Treasurer of Bass Island."

There were two authors writing for Golden Days whose works I never ran across elsewhere. But they were writers worthy to rate with other writers such as Ellis, Stratemeyer, Otis, Castlemon, etc., as far as writing high class boys fiction is concerned. These two writers were Dr. Willard Mackenzie and Edward Shippen, M. D. Both names might have been non-deplumes of some famous writer named above. Personally, I am unable to state.

By Edward Shippen, M. D., we have "Tiger Island and Elsewhere; or, Will Hendrick's Hard Experience," "Schooler Sailing and Beach Combing; or, Lee Haland's Adventures" and "York



Martin, A Story Founded on Fact."

And by Dr. Willard Mackenzie we have as follows. "The Ready Boys and How they Got There," "Bright as a Dollar; or, The Mishaps and Adventures of Bob Dalas," "Don and His Friends" and "Hidden Gold; or, A Boy With a Mystery." Fine tales of adventure and I often wonder why we never saw these authors names elsewhere. Now as to those "namby-pamby," "Little Lord Fauntleroy" tales that often cause one to use "snap" judgement regarding Golden Hours—here are a few samples: "The Golden Goose; or, The Little Maid and the Miser" by Jas. H. Smith, "No Boys Allowed; or, Madam Cleyes Grand-Daughter," by Rose Hartwick Thrope, "Lelia's Hero; or, We Boys and Girls in Florida," by Elsie Leigh Whittlesey.

Now these tales were written for boys and girls about 13-14 years of age. No wonder the robust "blood and thunder" lads of that era were disinclined to read Golden Days. But this sort of tale was sadly in the minority for which I for one am truly thankful at this late day. As a lad, I did not fully understand what really fine tales that Golden Days put out as a rule.

The short stories were nearly all written by very good authors also. Names familiar to most of you I think, such as John H. Whitson, W. Bert Foster, George Waldo Browne, J. C. Harbaugh, Wm. Murray Graydon, Will Lisenbee, Capt. L. C. Carleton, etc.

One reason why I like Golden Days today is for its "homey" rural tales, both serial and short. They surely do bring back fond memories of boyhood, as I was raised on a farm myself. Golden Days ran many articles for their youthful readers on how to do things, as for instance, "How to make an Electric Bell Outfit," "How to Build a Rowing Punt," "How to Press Plants," "How to Skin, Stuff and Mount a Bird," "The Prairie Whistle and How to Make It," and many other articles along the same lines.

As for the departments, it had its weekly Bible lesson under the heading of "International Lesson" by Rev. G. E. Strobridge, D.D. And it had a puzzle department called "Puzzledom" composed of Anagrams, Enigmas, Acrostics, Pentagons, etc. Usually a full half page to these puzzles. Then there was a full half page of answers to correspondents, titled "Our Letter Box"

and a half page of short jokes and small comic cartoons. The editorial page usually contained two or more interesting fact articles and at least one poem.

So all in all, I for one, have come to the conclusion that Golden Days was not the "namby-pamby" paper that I hastily and thoughtlessly called it in my youth.

I started this article several weeks ago and before I had finished it my annual vacation time arrived. And it was a pleasure and a greatly enjoyed privilege to spend a week end with my old friend of years, "Reckless Ralph" Cummings.

This is not the time nor place to enumerate the wonderful sights I saw there, both in old dime novels and story papers, but I do wish to state what I saw there in bound volumes of Golden Days, is something to talk about. Ralph has huge stacks yet of these bound volumes for sale. All in mint condition, just as good as the day the publisher shipped them out. In fact just as good in every way as the day they came from the binder. Ralph can't supply all volumes of Golden Days. He told me just how many he could supply, but I have forgotten. But anyway, he has a huge stock of duplicates of all volumes that he really can supply. And they can be supplied in all colors of the rainbow, Red, Blue, Green, Purple, Lavender, Black, Brown, Gold, Silver, etc., etc. A uniform color set of all volumes that Ralph can supply can yet be had. Or a variety of colors, just as one desires. Personally, I would desire the variety and mean in the near future, to get as many volumes in as many colors as Ralph can supply.

Now this latter was not intended for an "ad" nor as a "boost" to help Ralph sell his volumes of Golden Days. It was meant solely to advise story paper collectors, who have not seen this huge stock of G. D. volumes that they are missing out on a finely bound set of "Golden Days" that at present can be had at a price per volume below the original publishers price. (Believe it or not. They are selling as bound volumes, less than publishers price for same.) Ten years from now we will be paying \$10.00 or more per volume, for these same volumes.

(Editor of Dime Novel Roundup says:

The Golden Days started in 1880,

and the first volume ran to 40 numbers. Volume two and up, ran to 52 numbers per volume. The first 3, 4 or 5 volumes never had covers on them, but after that, they had a sort of green cover on them every week, no change. Then there was a time when they published 4 Golden Days in parts. Part 1 and so on, had 4 nos. each in them. The exchange columns were interesting too. Volume 28 was the last volume published, and the stories from Vol. 20 or before were mostly reprints, so I understand.

### ONE FOR RIPLEY

by Eli A. Messier

In 1946 I received a letter from an acquaintance of mine whom we will call Mr. A for the purpose of this little article. Mr. A has resided in a small community since about the turn of the century.

He wrote me that the other Sunday an automobile drove into his yard and an elderly gentleman came to his door and introduced himself as Mr. B and said that he had been born in that house over 60 years before and lived there till he was 15 years old.

This was the first time he had ever revisited his birthplace and he asked Mr. A if he would be kind enough to let him go through the house. Mr. A was only too glad to give this permission and much enjoyed that trip thru the different rooms of the house while Mr. B recalled bits about his childhood days. After the trip through the house Mr. B said he would like to visit the carriage house.

This was a substantial building that stood at some distance back of the house. About half of the building was open at one side so that vehicles could be backed under shelter. The other part of the building was enclosed on all sides and used as a carpenter shop and harness repair shop.

Mr. B said he spent many happy hours in that building, making bird houses and fixing his sled, etc. His father always encouraged him in using tools so that when he was in this building no questions were asked and Mr. B laughed and said it also served as his reading room.

When he was about 11 years old someone gave him 3 novels, he carried them home with delight to show

to his father and mother. But his mother did not share his delight. She said that cheap literature was ruining the children and she was going to burn the novels before he had read them. But Mr. B said his father came to his rescue. It was compromised by allowing him to read the books and then they would be burned. Mr. B said he bet they were not burned till his father had read them himself. And what great stories they were. The "Baaad Injuns" died by the score at the hands of our hero.

The carriage house had a stairway running up to a storage loft and the stairs were boxed not just tread planks. Mr. B indicated one of the treads and said he used to sit on that step and read novels and by looking over the top of his book he could see the path leading up to the back door of the house and if any one appeared he had a safe cache all prepared. He had withdrawn the nails in the tread plank on which he sat and with an awl had slightly enlarged the nail holes so that he could withdraw or insert the nails with his fingers. So if he saw anyone approaching, in a jiffy he had the tread plank raised and the novel dropped in the stair box.

Mr. A wrote they had a good laugh over that then they went back to Mr. B's car and he left.

Mr. A walked back to the carriage shop musing over Mr. B's visit. He sat down on the stair tread Mr. B had indicated and gazed out the window and up the path to the back door of the house. Without any fixed purpose Mr. A wrote, he reached down and lifted on the stair tread plank.

It was loose and he easily removed the nails and looked into the stair box. You've already guessed, There lay a little bunch of novels, here is a list of the novels in that cache.

No. 892	Wide Awake Library
846	Wide Awake Library
880	Wide Awake Library
190	Saturday Library
3	Nugget Library
6	Nugget Library
274	Beadle's Pocket Library
622	Beadle's Half Dime Library
725	Nickel Library
731	Nickel Library

Mr. A wrote he regretted that the novels had not been found while Mr. B was there. Mr. A said he would have loved to have watched the old gentle-



man's face as he looked at the little pile of novels which no eye had seen, and no hand had touched, since he put them in their resting place in the stair box, in the golden, happy days of childhood, 50 years before.

It's one for Ripley. But it's true and "isn't it a happy little incident?"

### NASSAU STREET

"The little bank on Nassau St." This is the phrase or sentence which will be remembered by so many of the readers of the old "Fame and Fortune" tales of our happy boyhood.

Nassau Street in New York City, the city of many a hair-raising plot in the dime novel era. Nassau Street, where the boy brokers would take their funds for investments in "the Little Bank around the corner." Chas. Estcourt Jr. called it the SkyLiner's, as the lunch promenade where hard-boiled truckers do not hesitate to run a man down without warning. Here the shopmen, collectors, and merchants make a midway of bazaar almost from Park Row to Wall Street. The thousands of offices pour out their clerks, accountants, bookkeepers, etc. at noon and evening quitting time to be scattered all over the city, as each of them seeks his home at the close of the day. At night the charwomen and scrubbers enter the buildings to scrub and clean up after the workers in the offices have gone their ways. There with scrub buckets and mops in hand they work, and often upon their knees so the offices will be ready on the following morning.

Those who traverse this historic and romantic street will pass the Equitable Bldg., the Federal Reserve Bank, J. P. Morgan's building, and the New York Stock Exchange, where so many wall street messengers were often found on errands for their employers, and ever and anon doing some buying and selling on their own account. I mean the messenger boys of fiction—the heroes of "Fame and Fortune" in which appeared the "Stories of Boys Who Made Money," as the masthead of the weekly informed us.

Nassau Street, the name brings us back to the days of happy boyhood, and we live again the experiences of "the Boy Brokers of Wall Street" and "the Little Bank on Nassau Street."

—W. B. McCafferty

### NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Frisco Bert Couch visited Henry Stinemetts, and saw his very fine collection of Beadles Dime & Half Dime libraries the other day. Both pards were out to see Bro. Cummings last fall, the same day, and neither one knew the other was coming, nor had they ever met before. Frisco Bert's squaw was along too.

Life of Belle Starr, notorious Western woman Bandit, appeared in the Dec. 1947 number of the Pony Express Mag., Placerville, Calif. Price 25c.

The night before new years, Clyde Wakefield's house had been broken into, and a lot of things taken. Poor Clyde sure has had plenty of hard luck lately. When it comes it comes in bunches, and a few days later his nephew was killed by a hit and run driver.

Claude Held, 372 Dodge St., Buffalo 8, N. Y. says he'll pay \$5.00 each for Weird Tales, Apr., May & June 1923, Nov. 1924 and May 1926, and Astounding, Jan. 1930 and \$3.00 each for Amazing Stories, Mar. 1926, Amazing Stories Annual 1927, Thrill Book 1919, All Around Feb. 1916. All must be in good condition.

Herman Brauner visited with Charles Taylor, and had a fine time, and a chat on novels.

Edward Morrill and Son has bought a new book store, see ad enclosed, and is open for business.

Thomas Funderbark, 9 Hollis St., Worcester 3, Mass., has one of the nicest collections of the Pocket Book and Bantam book series in New England. He has some very rare and scarce old timers, and he only needs a few numbers to have both sets right up to date. Some of the real scarce ones he needs are Pocket Book Series #27, 75, 163, 176, 188, 198, 199, 265, 273, 291, 299 and 289. A funny thing, it would take a Philadelphia lawyer to keep track of them, as they came out, for we'll say 289 is out today and 247 next week and so on. Some crazy idea's the publishers have nowadays. Tommy says he's getting another book case. He sure needs it too, and the best of all, his wife likes them too, that's some thing, it's when they don't like them that the fun begins.

Clyde Wakefield wants to know where can he get some of the 1d Buf-

falo Bill Libraries that were published in England, about 45 years ago, or so? He says even one would be appreciated very much. When he was a youngster, he and his grandfather used to read them. They are about the size of the Dick Turpin 1 penny nos. Clyde says he'll give a fine trade in American or English novels for one or more copies.

We're almost snowed in, up here in old New England, and we get one storm after the other. Some folks prayed for a white Christmas, and on Dec. 23rd and then on we've had plenty, and some pretty cold snappy weather too. Too bad we're not out where George Flaum is, or Frisco Bert.

Buddy King, 403 East St., Dalton, Ga., wants auto license plates, radiator name plates and auto animals.

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### PARTIAL LIST OF MEMBERS FOR 1948 of H. H. BRO.

12. Charles Bragin, 1525 W. 12th St., Brooklyn 4, N. Y.
30. Herbert Leitstein, 8733 Bay 16th St., Brooklyn 14, N. Y.
42. J. P. Guinon, Box 214, Little Rock, Ark.
43. Harold C. Holmes, 1072 Townsend Ave., New Haven 13, Conn.
48. Frank M. Harris, P. O. Box 85, Ashland, N. H.
98. G. D. Nichols, c/o S. P. Ry., Nogales, Ariz.
101. Edward Morrill, 144 Kingston St., Boston 11, Mass.
107. Earle Barr Hanson, 812 S. W. First St., Miami 36, Fla.
123. Charles J. Duprez, Bellerose, L. I., N. Y.
126. Henry Lofgren, 2408 Louis St., Blue Island, Ill.
130. George A. Urban, 1002 N. Chicago Ave., So. Milwaukee, Wisc.
132. John P. Dorst, Whitingham, Vt.
139. Sam Tanenbaum, 135 Magnolia St., Hartford 5, Conn.
209. Harrie E. Kelley, South Dayton, N. Y. (New member)

**New Address:**

117. Talbot C. Hatch, Woodland Point, Mound, Minn.

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- Buffalo Bill 186.
- Nick Carter 462, 814.
- Secret Service 284, 292.
- Brave and Bold 186.
- Might and Main 10.
- Diamond Dick Jr. 395
- Fame and Fortune 38, 222, 223.
- \*Work and Win 272, 288, 292, 293, 299, 314, 355.
- \*Wild West 185, 149.
- Old Sleuth Weekly 111.

All have both covers. All are in very good to excellent condition, except that items marked by asterisk are fair to good—minor tears or soiled.

F. C. ACKER

Prospect Ave. Middletown, R. I.

## FOR SALE

- Felina de Chambire, or the Female Fiend, by Alex. Dumas, about 1870, \$1.00.  
 Matricides Daughter, A tale of life in the Great Metropolis, the Star of the fallen, a tale. The Victims Revenge, all 3 stories by Newton M. Curtis, 1850. \$2.  
 New York Mercury Stories, Pub. by F. A. Brady, 1862. Very rare—title "La Masque or the Midnight Queen, by Cousin May Carleton, Illust. by Darley, price \$1.25.  
 The Home Library of Powerful Dramatic Tales #57. Pub. by Aldine Pub. Co., London, 3d. Fallen Among Thieves, by Oswald Allan, Price 50c.  
 The Rifle Rangers by Capt. Mayne Reid. George at the Fort, George in Camp, by Harry Castlemon. The Traitors, by E. Phillips Oppenheim. The Green Mountain Boys, by Judge D. P. Thompson, Sanford and Merton, by Thomas Day. Ben Burton, the Slate Picker, by Harry Prentiss. Joseph Vance, by John De Morgan. In the Apache Country, by Lieut. R. H. Jayne, Camp Fire Girls, The Divers, by Hume Nisbet, Thrilling Adventures in the Forest, and on the Frontier. Kent Knowles "Quahog," by Joseph C. Lincoln, The Haunted Attic by Margaret Sutton. Frank Allready's Fortune, by Franklin Fox, Pirate Island, by Harry Collingwood, The Bad Boy Abroad, by Walter T. Gray, Ernest Linwood, by Caroline Lee Hentz 1856, the Silver Ship, by Leon Lewis, The Hound of the Baskervilles, by A. Conan Doyle, Wild Fire, by Zane Grey, The Mystery at the JHC Ranch, by W. C. Tuttle. Try Again, by Oliver Optic. The Great God Gold, by William Le Queux. Strange Fruit, by Lillian Smith. The Prince of Thieves and other stories, by Alex. Dumas. Border Beagles, or a tale of Mississippi, by W. G. Simms. Price 60c each.  
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 Diamond Dick Jr. Weekly #716, 631, 637, 499, 743, 749.  
 Motor Stories #16, 31. Tip Top Weekly 690, 689, 687, 576, 596, 597  
 Wild West Weekly #739, 749, 858. New Nick Carter Weekly #430.  
 New Buffalo Bill Weekly #35, 70. Brave & Bold 427 426 220 429 428  
 Pluck & Luck #1143, 864. Rough Rider #133, 173.  
 Beadles Half Dime Library #45. Wide Awake Weekly #142, 145.  
 Secret Service #835, 946. Frank Manley Weekly #7.  
 Boys Best Weekly #37 51 52 36 37 58 55 38 39 40 44 45 46 48 50.  
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 The above have various defects, but front cover and reading matter there.  
 The following haven't any front or back covers, reading matter all there.  
 Brave & Bold #345, 428, Tip Top Weekly #173 178 168 257 255 198 95 181  
 201 557 398 277 339, Liberty Boys of 76 #133 205 128 202 567 117 516 547 557 517  
 212, New Nick Carter Weekly #804 802 304 655 767 Fame & Fortune Weekly  
 #610 750 534 316, Secret Service #309, Nick Carter Stories #12 93, Three  
 Chums #49, The Young Rough Riders Weekly #23, The Buffalo Bill Stories  
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 1276 927, Pluck & Luck #1440 1258 1295 1520 1297, Fame & Fortune Weekly  
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